

INTRODUCTION

This report presents a brief discussion of the major forest insect pests observed on the Wasatch National Forest during 1965. Material for this report was compiled from information taken from annual aerial survey data and subsequent on-the-ground examinations of infested areas. The mountain pine beetle and fir engraver beetles were the only significant insect problems encountered on the Forest this year. A brief resume of these problems follows:

Mountain pine beetle, Dendroctonus monticolae Hopk.

In 1959, control efforts were initiated to contain a massive outbreak of mountain pine beetle infesting lodgepole pine stands on the north side of the Forest. Since that time the combination of control measures, logging, and natural factors have reduced mountain pine beetle populations to a tolerable level.

Briefly, no serious outbreaks of mountain pine beetle activity were observed on the forest this year. Overall indications point toward a continued downward trend.

Many two-year old beetle killed trees retained most of their needles which made it difficult for aerial observers to distinguish between new and old "faders". This phenomenon was also observed in other mountain pine beetle infested lodgepole pine stands elsewhere in the Region. Consequently, aerial observers overestimated the intensity and extent of infestations in many areas. Followup ground examinations of the most serious areas showed that very few green trees had been attacked. Newly attacked trees were few, widely scattered and contained minimal brood densities. Many trees contained only two or three inches of gallery and no eggs. Current red tops outnumbered new attacks 4-5 to 1. The pitchout ratio was 1:1.

Many scattered groups of faded lodgepole pine were observed between Mill City Creek and the Bear River. Observers mapped 200 - 300 new "faders" in Ostler Creek in the Stillwater drainage. No ground examination was made in either of these areas.

Fir engraver beetles, Scolytus ventralis LeC., and/or Dryocoetes confusus Sw.

These beetles together with an unknown physiological factor caused the loss of thousands of fir trees throughout the Wasatch National Forest during 1965. Some of the most noticeable damage occurs near the Alta and Brighton ski areas. This complex mortality problem has persisted in these areas for several years. Rough estimates from aerial surveys show that 400 - 500 trees are currently dead. In other areas of the Forest, groups of dead trees containing 5 - 15 faders were not uncommon.

Biological evaluations of a few of the infestations were made but most are in inaccessible areas and ground evaluations were impossible because of time and manpower limitations.

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It appears likely that tree killing by engraver beetles and this unknown physiological factor will continue at a high level with a slight increase in damage expected next year.

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Submitted by

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